

FAST FACTS

Support for Early Childhood Education

Nationwide, there is a renewed focus on early childhood education as evidenced by the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund, the newly developed federal Office of Early Learning, and new opportunities for technical assistance centers; one specifically designed to support early childhood education. Therefore, the state Title I office has developed this fast fact sheet to provide schools, districts, and other interested parties with guidance on the topic of early childhood education as well as to provide a summary of resources and funding opportunities.

Title I Funds to Support Pre-kindergarten

Offering a Title I paid pre-kindergarten program at the district level can be tricky because in most districts there are both Title I and non-Title I schools. Since Title I funds can only be used in Title I buildings, it presents a concern about not being able to allow all pre-kindergarten age students in the district to attend the program. Furthermore, it would be a supplanting issue to use Title I funds for eligible students, and district or local funds for non-eligible students. However, if all of the elementary schools in the district are Title I eligible buildings, then the district could possibly offer a district-wide Title I paid program.

A Title I school could use its building level Title I funds to operate a pre-kindergarten program. Title I funds in a targeted assistance school would only be able to fund pre-kindergarten services to those students identified through a pre-kindergarten student selection process; whereas, in a schoolwide program all students in the attendance area would be eligible to attend if the pre-kindergarten services are described in the schoolwide plan.

Grants

Department of Commerce Early Childhood Education Grants –

Early Childhood Environment Grant – North Dakota public school districts operating an approved new or expanded pre-kindergarten program may apply for a grant, up to \$10,000 to establish pre-kindergarten space appropriate for an early childhood setting.

Early Childhood Continuing Education Grant – North Dakota residents may receive a \$3,000 early childhood education grant. To qualify for the grant award, the eligible recipient must be enrolled in a North Dakota college or university and either be a pre-kindergarten teacher or teacher assistant for whom a baccalaureate degree will be required in the future or an individual working in the childcare industry who wishes to obtain an Associate's Degree or Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Other Early Childhood Initiatives

Gearing Up for Kindergarten – Title I funds can be used to supplement the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program in Title I buildings. Schoolwide programs can serve all students and parents. Targeted assistance programs can only serve selected at-risk students and their parents. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program. [LINK]

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact the Division of Student Support & Innovation at (888) 605-1951.